إن الدين عند الله الإسلام

The Review of Religions

Edited by Ghulam Farid Malik, M. A.

Vol. XXXII FEBRUARY, 1933 No. 2

Digitized by Khilafat Library Rabwah

CONTENTS

	Pages
THE WAY TO PEACE AMONG RELIGIONS —Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II ...	57
THE VALUE AND AIMS OF ISLAMIC STUDIES —Mr. Muhammad Aslam, B.A. (Cantab.) ...	58
SIR P. C. RAY ON ISLAM ...	72
WHO BURNT THE ALEXANDRIA LIBRARY —Mr. Muhammad Hussian, B. Com. ...	73
CHRISTIANITY AND DIVORCE —Maulvi Muhammad Din, B.A. (a former Muslim Missionary in America) ...	82
THE MAIN OBJECT—Dr. M. M. Sadiq, D. D. ...	90
VASWANI'S HOMAGE TO MUHAMMAD ...	91
ISLAM THE GREATEST INTEGRATING FORCE IN THE WORLD ...	92
INDIA'S ENEMIES ...	94
NOTES ON THE HOLY QURAN ...	97

Head Office :
QADIAN,
Punjab : India.

Branch Office :
THE LONDON MOSQUE,
63, Melrose Road, Southfields, London, S. W. 18.

IF . . .

YOU WANT TO KNOW

What Islam Stands for, what is its message for humanity, how does it seek to raise man from the lowest depths of degradation to the highest pinnacles of glory—economically, morally and spiritually

READ

AHMADIYYAT OR THE TRUE ISLAM

BY

Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad

HEAD OF THE AHMADIYYA COMMUNITY AND THE GREATEST LIVING AUTHORITY ON ISLAM

The book deals in a simple and lucid manner, briefly but fully and completely, with all the different aspects of the teachings of Islam.

BOOK DEPOT, QADIAN, Pb., India

of these " spouses " or to associate them with anything coarse or physical.

Again, as already pointed out, the Muslim does not look upon paradise as purely an after death concern but he believes it to begin in this very world and continue in the next in a more pronounced and fuller state. Consequently, the reward of chaste wives promised to Muslims in paradise must be taken in the same twofold sense. As to the paradise of the hereafter, the purity of the wives there is absolutely unquestionable. As regards the paradise of this world, it is a matter of history that the Muslims were favoured with chaste wives. As a matter of fact, adultery becomes rife both among the victors and the vanquished because soldiers have to stay away from their homes for a long time, but it is surprising to see that even in the height of victory the Muslims did not stoop to this evil.

ان الله لا يستحى ان يضرب مثلاً ما بعوضة فما فوقها۔ فاما الذين آمنوا فيعلمون انه الحق من ربهم واما الذين كفروا فيقولون ماذا اراد الله بهذا مثلا يضل به كثيرا ويهدي به كثيرا۔ وما يضل به الا الفسقين۔

27. *Innal-lāha lā yastaḥyī an-yaḍriba Mathalammā ba'uḍatan fa mā fauqa-hā ; fa ammal-ladhina āmanú fa ya'lamúna anna-hul-haqqu mir rabbi-him, wa ammalladhīna kafarú fa-yaqúlúna mādhā arādallāhu bi hādhā mathalā yuḍillu bi hī kathīran wa yahdi bi hī kathīrā ; wa mā yuḍillu bī hī illal fāsiqīn.*

27. Certainly, Allah does not refrain from giving a description like that of a gnat and what exceeds it. And as for those who believe, they know that it is the truth from their Lord, but as for those who disbelieve, they say, ' What is it that Allah means by such a description ? ' Thereby he adjudges many as erring, and thereby He leads many to guidance ; and none does He adjudge as erring but the rebellious.

40. لا يستحى *lā yastaḥyī* means ' is not ashamed ' and ' does not abstain from ' (Lane's Lexicon, p. 680). Some

translators have adopted the former meaning which cannot be ascribed to God and which does not suit the context. Consequently the latter meaning has been adopted here.

ضرب *daraba* means 'mentioned' (Taj-ul-Arus, Vol. I, P. 347) مثل *mathal* means ' description ' or ' parable.' (Lane's Lexicon, P. 3017). ضرب المثل *Darbul-Maṯhal* generally means 'to propound a parable' but it also means ' to make a statement' or 'give a description.' (*vide* XXIV, 46, XXV, 10) فما فوقها *famā fauqa-hā* means " and what is smaller than it." In reply to one who says ' such a one is small,' the Arabs say وفوق ذالك "and smaller than that." Thus, the verse means " Allah does not refrain from giving a description as small as a gnat and what is smaller than it." بعوضة *ba'uḍa* (a gnat) is a symbol of littleness. It is derived from بعض *ba'ḍ* which means a part. A gnat is called بعوضة *ba'uḍa* because of its very small size. The illustration of a gnat as employed in this verse implies that what has been said of paradise in the previous verse is only by way of suggestion, for human language is too weak to convey to the mind of man any distinct idea of the sweet pleasures which the blessed will enjoy in heaven, for the blessings of heaven are such that no eye has seen them nor has the ear heard of them nor can the mind conceive them. The only possible mode of description, therefore, is the use of allegory.

After giving a description of paradise, God says that although the description given is very brief (as the Arabic word بعوضة ' gnat ' implies) and the disbelievers will question the propriety of such a description, yet the believers will thereby be enabled to form some idea of the fuller rewards that are reserved for them in the life to come. Similarly, the rewards which they were to get in this world are also very briefly stated. Those unacquainted with the ways of God raise the objection that the prophetic utterances are never clear and explicit and are very

lacking in details. They inveigh against the use of the metaphor and demand a detailed description of prophecy in order to appreciate it. In reply to this, God says that God cannot, for the sake of these silly objections, deviate from His usual course which is rooted in profound wisdom. No doubt the prophecies do not embrace details, but the believers know for certain that these prophecies must come true some day when all the necessary details will unfold themselves. The objectors fail to comprehend that prophecies serve to distinguish the truth-loving believers from the refractory unbelievers. If the prophecies be as clear as day, then there will be no criterion left for the distinction of the righteous from the unrighteous. It is the new moon and not the full moon that serves to distinguish the short-sighted from the keen-sighted.

"*Thereby He adjudges many as erring, and thereby He leads many to guidance.*" This is the first purpose served by a brief description of prophecies : it serves to distinguish between the real seekers of truth and those that are perverse. The former are guided thereby, while the latter go astray.

Digitized by Khilafat Library Rabwah

This verse should not be misconstrued to mean that the Holy Qur-ān was revealed to lead men astray or that God uses it as a means to make men deviate from the right path. God expressly says about the Holy Qur-ān that it has been revealed to guide men to the true path and not to mislead them. We read in Ch. LVII, 10 :—" He it is Who sends down clear signs to His servant that He may lead you out of darknesses into light : and truly, Allah is compassionate *and* merciful to you." Again :—" O men, there has now come to you an admonition from your Lord and a remedy for what is in the minds." (X, 58.)

Thus it is clear that the Holy Qur-ān has not been revealed to lead men astray. Hence the clause يضل به كثيرا *yuḍillu bi hī kaṯhīran* cannot here mean " Thereby He

leads many astray" : it only means "He adjudges many to be erring." The words that follow, *viz.* وما يضل به الا الفسقين *wa mā yuḍillu bi hī illal-fāsiqīn* justify the above explanation, for they mean that it is only the rebellious that are adjudged guilty by means of the Holy Qur-ān.

الذين ينقضون عهد الله من بعد ميثاقه ويقطعون ما امر الله به ان يوصل ويفسدون في الارض. اولئك هم الخسرون.

28. *Alladhina yanquḍúna 'ahdallāhi min-ba'di mīthāqihī wa yaqṭa'úna mā amarallāhu bi hī an-yúṣala wa yufsidúna fil arḍ. Ulā'ika humul khāsirún.*

28. Who break the covenant of Allah after its ratification, and cut asunder what Allah has bidden to be joined, and act corruptly in the earth ; it is these that are the losers.

41. This verse gives a description of the 'rebellious' who are adjudged as erring. It shows that the objectors to the prophets are always those who are in the habit of breaking God's commandments and causing disturbances on earth. That is to say, sincere enquirers are never among those who violently oppose the prophets of God.

كيف تكفرون بالله وكنتم امواتا فاحياكم ثم يميتكم ثم يحييكم ثم اليه ترجعون.

29. *Kaifa takfurúna billāhi wa kuntum amwātan fa ahyā kum thumma yumītu kum thumma yuhyī kum thumma ilai-hi turja'ún.*

29. How can you disbelieve in Allah when you were without life and He gave you life, when will He cause you to die, then restore you to life, and then to Him shall you be made to return.

كفر بالله *Kufr billāh* either means "to deny the existence of Allah" or "to deny some of His commandments," or "to deny some of His attributes". The expression used in the

verse under comment does not mean "absolute denial of the existence of God," but of some of His attributes, and also implies the refusal to obey His commandments.

In this verse, five states of man are mentioned. *First*, the state when he was lifeless. This refers to the period before he came to have life in the womb of his mother, or when his existence was yet latent in matter before his taking shape as spermatozoa in the body of his father. *Secondly*, the animal state which commences from the time when soul develops in the organism after the latter has gone through different stages. *Thirdly*, the state of death when the soul leaves the corporeal frame. *Fourthly*, the life beyond the grave, which immediately follows. This state gradually ripens into the *fifth* and final state which is indicated in the words ثم الیه ترجعون "Then to Him shall you be made to return," and which may be called the state of "return to God," when man will be called upon to render an account of his deeds.

One way of arguing followed by the Holy Qur-ān is that it first mentions certain facts which are admitted by all and then draws therefrom a conclusion which so naturally follows from the said facts that no body can deny it. Thus in the verse under comment the Holy Qur-ān first mentions the well-known facts that man was first lifeless, then God gave him life and then He will cause him to die. Now the question naturally arises, whether all the faculties and powers with which man has been endowed and all the means and all the resources that he has been provided with are meant for this life only. Is man with such wonderful faculties and powers and with such vast resources meant only to die and become dust, and is that the final end of man? Either man who is gifted with such boundless powers should have known no death or there must be a life beyond the grave. Surely man does not come into being merely to lead an ephemeral existence of sixty, seventy or a hundred years. Hence the Holy

Qur-ān says that man's existence will not end with death, but that God will give him a new life after death. He will be born again into a new life and will go on progressing. That new life beyond the grave will be another embryoic life during which he will be prepared for the next stage which has been represented as "a return to God" and which is also known as the Resurrection. The period between death and resurrection is like the period in the womb which is a period of preparation for the life on earth, and when man has finished this second period of preparation, he will be resurrected and return to God to render an account of his deeds. Hence when man's existence is not to end with the present life, it naturally follows that he should be provided with guidance from God. Hence the need of divine revelation. The same argument is continued in the next verse.

هوالذی خلق لکم مافی الارض جمیعا۔ ثم استوی الی السماء فسوھن سبع سماوات وھو بکل شیئ علیم۔

Digitized by Khilafat Library Rabwah

30. Huwal-ladhī khalaqa la kum mā fil arḍi jamī'an thummas-tawā ilas-samā'i fa sawwā-hunna sab'a samāwat ; wa huwa bi kulli shai'in 'alīm.

30. He it is who created for you all that is in the earth; and then turned towards the heaven, and into seven heavens did He fashion it; and He knows all things best.

43. That is, whatever is on the earth has been created by God for the benefit of man. Elsewhere we read :— "And He has made subservient to you whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth altogether, *as a favour* from Himself. In that surely are signs to a people who reflect." (XLV, 14). Thus, the verse under comment read together with the one quoted above, makes it clear that not only the things on this earth but also those in other spheres are highly beneficial to man. The influence of the Sun, the Moon, and other heavenly bodies is of mmense benefit to mankind. Modern Science has

discovered many a new mode of utilising the influence of these heavenly bodies and fresh discoveries are yet being made which all are so many testimonies to the truth and comprehensiveness of the Holy Qur-ān. Science has also thrown such a flood of light on the properties of the things of this earth that many things which were formerly thought to be useless are now considered highly serviceable to man.

Digitized by Khilafat Library Rabwah

In short, all the things of the world minister to the benefit of man, and of all the creatures of God, he alone has been endowed with a knowledge of how to profit by them. Now when so many things have been created to promote the comfort of man and to extend the field of his activities and when unlimited provision has been made for his material advancement, it cannot be supposed that the All-Knowing God has created man without any purpose, or that, like other irrational animals, the life of man is also to be free from the bonds of Law. When all the rest of the creation is plainly intended to extend the sphere of his knowledge and actions, it is only right that there should be a set of rules to guide his course of actions and direct his energies into useful channels.

ثم *thumma* here does not denote sequence but is used merely in a copulative sense, meaning *and*. سماوات *Samāwāt*, Plural of سماء *Samā'*, means 'heights' [*vide* note No. 36(*b*)]. Thus سبع سماوات means 'seven *heights* or altitudes.' The verse means that God has divided the wide expanse overhead into seven spheres.

God says that He has created heavens and the earth for the sake of man. Is it then reasonable to think that God has created all this merely for this transitory life of man? Has man with all this vast universe placed at his disposal been created merely to enjoy himself for a short time in this world and then die and be no more. Not so. Man has been created not only for this life, but also for the life to come. Hence it is necessary that God should send down revelation for his guidance.

واذ قال ربک للملئکة انی جاعل فی الارض خلیفة قالوا اتجعل فیها من یفسد فیها و یسفک الدماء ونحن نسبح بحمدک ونقدس لک قال انی اعلم ما لا تعلمون۔

31. Wa idh qàla Rabbu-ka lil-malā 'ikati innī jā'ilun fil arḍi khalifah. Qālu a-taj'alu fīhā man yufsidu fi-hā wa yasfikud-dimā'ā wa naḥnun nusabbiḥu bi-ḥamdi-ka wa nuqaddisu lak. Qāla inni a'lamu mā lā ta'lamūn.

31. And *remember* when thy Lord said to the angels: 'I am about to create a vicegerent in the earth.' They said, 'Wilt Thou create therein such a one as will cause trouble therein and shed blood, while we declare Thy sanctity with Thy praises and extol Thy holiness? He said, 'Certainly I know what you know not.'

44. After demonstrating the need of revelation rationally, the Holy Qur-ān proceeds to give historical evidence.

It points out that the revelation vouchsafed to the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of God be upon him!) is not the first revelation, but the revealed law was given to man at the very beginning of creation. So it cites the case of Adam.

خلیفه *Khalifah* means (1) one who succeeds another, (2) one who is succeeded by another, (3) a vicegerent. Thus the application of the word *Khalifah* to Adam in the verse enables us to infer, *first*, that God's creation did not commence with Adam, as is commonly supposed, but that Adam himself was a successor to some other creation that previously existed; *secondly*, that Adam's progeny was to increase and multiply and spread over the face of the globe; *thirdly*, that as a vicegerent of God, he was to invite men to submit to the Law of God.

When God informed the angels that He was to appoint a vicegerent on the earth, they inferred that He would also bring into being a creation which would shed blood and disturb the peace of the earth. Hence in order

to be fully enlightened on the matter, they inquired of God whether He would also create on earth such beings as would cause bloodshed and disturbance. This inquiry from the angels does in no way indicate, as is erroneously supposed, any spirit of criticism or dissatisfaction on their part. Nor can it be supposed to imply any desire on their part to be exalted to the office of the vicegerent on the ground of their being more deserving of that honor. This is amply borne out by the following words which the angels added to their inquiry "and we declare Thy sanctity with Thy praises and extol Thy holiness," meaning that their question was not by way of finding fault with His work, but by way of seeking greater knowledge of the nature and wisdom of the appointment. So God said in reply, "I know what you know not," meaning that the wisdom underlying the appointment was beyond their comprehension and that He alone knew it.

45 (*a*) By اسماء *asmā* '(names) are meant the ' names' or the attributes of God, and the words ' He taught Adam the names' mean that He implanted in him the capability to manifest in himslef all the attributes of God. Man differs from angles in the fact that whereas the former can be an image of all divine attributes, the latter represent only a few of them, as we learn from the verse :—" They (the angels) do what they are commanded " (XLVI, 7) which implies that they cannot act of their own, free-will. They have no independent will of their own but passively perform the functions allotted to them by providence. On the other hand, man, endowed as he is with volition and free choice, differs from angels in that he has in him the capabilities of being a perfect manifestation of all divine attributes. A saying of the Holy Prophet تخلقوا باخلاق الله *takhallaqú bi akhlāq-il-lāh* also points to this very end. It means : —" Develop in you such qualities as are akin to the attributes of God." As God is Merciful, you should also show mercy to all; as He is Forgiving, so you must also be ready to forgive your fellow-men ; as He

connives at faults, so you must imitate Him in this particular; and as He protects the weak, so you must be ready to protect the weak. Thus, both the Holy Qurān and the Holy Prophet's sayings concur to prove that man and angels differ in the manifestation of divine attributes. Man has been endowed with a knowledge of all the attributes of God and with a capacity to manifest them in himself, while angels have not been gifted with any such capacity.

(*b*) The pronoun *hum* in *'araḍa-hum* cannot refer to the noun 'names,' for according to Arabic grammar, the pronoun in that case ought to have been *hā* and not *hum*. This pronoun, therefore, refers to the manifestations of those names, *i.e.*, Adam and those among his progeny who had become images of all the attributes of God, such as the righteous servants of God and His holy messengers.

The verse means that God presented Adam and the righteous among his progeny before the angels and reminding them of what they had said, *viz.*, the appointment of a vicegerent on earth pre-supposed the creation of such beings as he might rule over and as might have capacity for evil—God asked them whether they could reflect in their life and being complete image of His attributes, whether He could fully reveal Himself in and through them, and whether they could enumerate the qualities implanted in Adam and his children; if not, the creation of Adam and his appointment as vicegerent were also necessary.

قالوا سبحنک لا علم لنا الا ما علمتنا انک انت العلیم الحکیم۔

33. *Qālū subḥānaka; lā 'ilma la nā illā mā 'allamtanā; inna-ka antal 'alīmul ḥakīm.*

33. They said, 'Holy art Thou! no knowledge have we, save that which Thou hast taught us. Surely, Thou art the Knowing, the Wise.'

46. As the angels were conscious of their nature and constitution, they frankly confessed that they were unable to reflect God's attributes in their totality—they could reveal only such of His attributes as He, with His good pleasure, had given them the power of revealing.

قال یآدم انبئھم باسمائھم فلما انبآھم باسمائھم قال الم اقل لکم انی اعلم غیب السموات والارض واعلم ما تبدون وما کنتم تکتمون۔

34. *Qāla yā Adamu ambi'hum bi-asmā'i-him fa-lammā amba'a-hum bi asmā'i-him qāla a-lam aqul-la-kum innī a'lamu ghaibas-samāwāti wal-arḍi, wa a'lamu ma tubdúna wa mā kuntum taktumún.*

Digitized by Khilafat Library Rabwah

34. He said, O Adam, inform them of their names; and when he had informed them of their names, He said: 'Did I not say to you, I certainly know the secrets of the heavens and of the earth, and I know what you reveal and what you conceal?'

47 (*a*) When the angels confessed their inability to manifest in themselves all the attributes of God, Adam, in obedience to the Divine will, manifested all the capabilities ingrained in him and showed to the angels the extensiveness of his capacities. Thus manifesting in himself, all the attributes of God, man proved the necessity of a being who might secure from God the power of will; who, putting his powers under His will, might, without any external compulsion, take to righteousness, (or sinning) and who might thereby reveal to the world the greatness and glory of God.

(*b*) The words واعلم ما تبدون وما کنتم تکتمون *wa a'lamu mà tubdúna wa mā kuntum taktumún* (and I know what you reveal and what you conceal), which God spoke to the angels, mean that He knew which divine attributes they manifested in themselves and which they were incapable of manifesting. کتم الربو *katamar rabwa* (he suppressed his breath) is said of a horse whose breath is interrupted by reason of the narrowness of the nostril (Lane's Lexicon page 2195).

Hence *mā kuntum taktumún* (what you conceal) refers to the attributes of God which the angels are unable to reveal in their own being on account of their natural inaptitude. It is a gross error to take the words, "What you reveal and what you conceal" as signifying that the angels were not true and sincere before God.

This conversation between God and angels and Adam need not necessarily be taken in a literal sense. It is not necessary that the dialogue should have actually taken place. Sometimes the practical upshot of events is portrayed in the form of a telling speech, and spoken words are ascribed to things incapable of speech. The purpose of such personification is only to show the existing condition of the things personified. A poet says :—

قالت له العينان سمعا وطاعة "Both of his eyes said 'we will listen and obey.'" Thus, it is clear that the conversation embodying the story of Adam suggests a picture of events.

واذ قلنا للملئكة اسجدوا لادم فسجدوا الا ابليس ابى واستكبر وكان من الكفرين.

35. *Wa idh qulnā lil-malā'ika-tisjudú li-Adama fa-sajadú illā Iblīs abā, was-takbara wa kāna minal-kāfirīn.*

35. And remember when we said to the angels, 'submit to Adam'; and they submitted, save Iblis; he refused and behaved arrogantly; and became one of the disbelievers.

48 (*a*) When Adam became an image of the attributes of God, and attained to the rank of a Prophet, God ordered the angels to serve Adam. اسجدوا لادم *usjudú li Adama* does not mean "Fall prostrate before Adam." The Holy Qurān says :—

لا تسجدوا للشمس ولا للقمر واسجدوا لله الذى خلقهن (حم السجدة)

"Prostrate not yourselves to the sun, nor to the moon, but prostrate yourselves to Allah, who created

them." (XLI, 38). Thus the worship of Adam is opposed to the teachings of the Holy Qur·ān, and such a command could never proceed from God. The term سجدہ *sijdah* or *sajdah* also signifies "obedience," and "submission." Thus the verse means that God bade the angels serve Adam, that is, assist him in his mission. In this way, the angels are ordered to serve all the Prophets and the Messengers of God, their chief duty being to protect the person of the Prophet and to draw the hearts of men towards him.

Digitized by Khilafat Library Rabwah

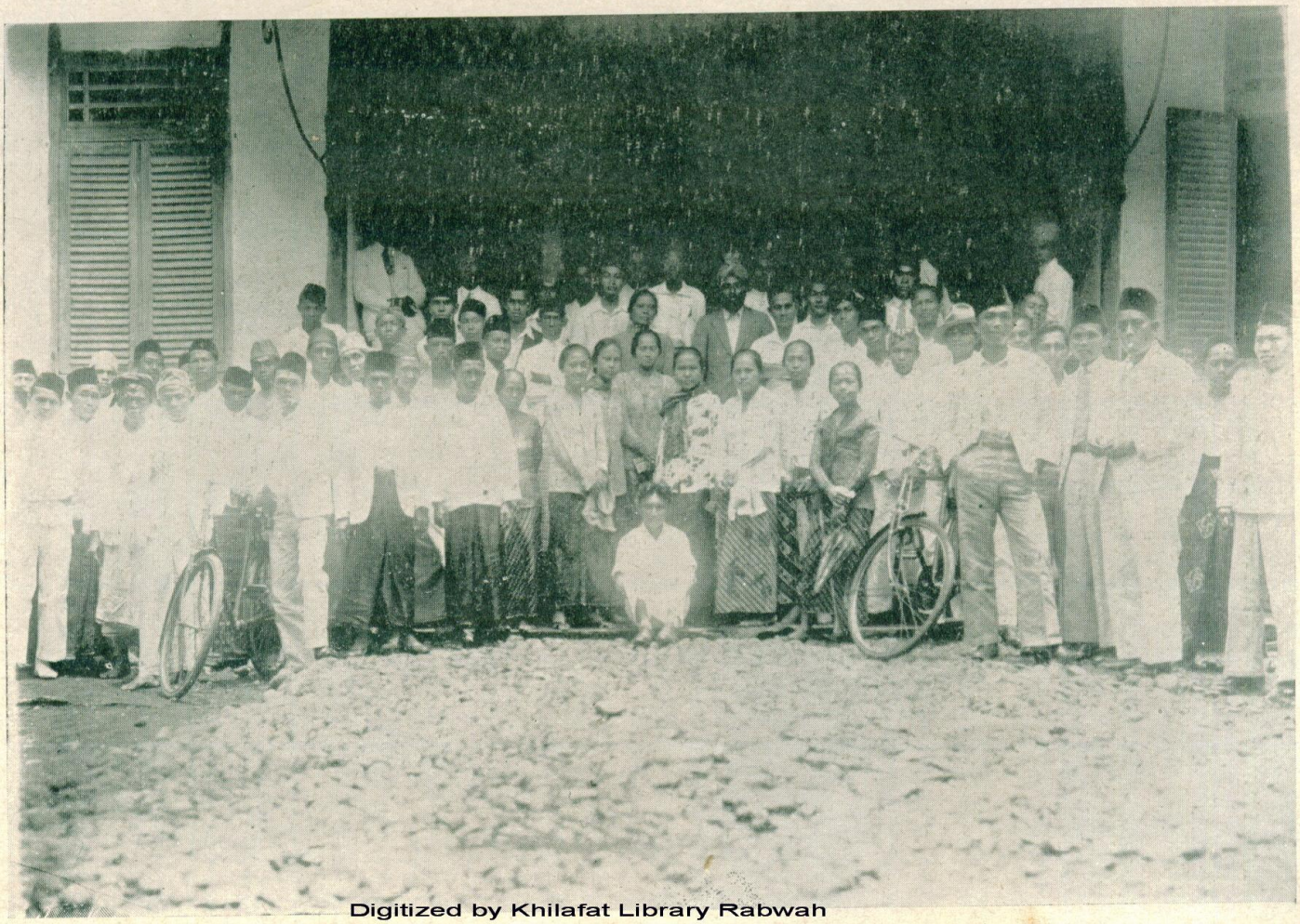
(*b*) *Iblīs* was not one of the angels, because the Holy Qur·ān says about them :—

لایعصون اللہ ما امرھم ویفعلون مایؤمرون۔ (تحریم)

"They disobey not Allah in what He commands them, but do what they are commanded." (LXVI, 7). Hence *Iblis* could not be an angel. The objection why God was angry with *Iblīs* whereas the commandment was meant for the angels and not for him, is baseless, for elsewhere the Holy Qur·ān says :—

ما منعک الا تسجد اذ امرتک (اعراف)

"What hindered thee *and asked thee* not to submit when I commanded thee ?" This shows that *Iblīs*, though not an angel, was also ordered to make submission to Adam. Moreover, even if there were no separate commandment for *Iblīs*, the one for angels extended to all others, because the orders given to angels are meant to be put into force among all creatures. Hence, the commandment for angels was meant for all creatures and whoever disobeyed the commandment deserved punishment.



Digitized by Khilafat Library Rabwah

A section of the Ahmadiyya Community, Buitenzong (Java). The gentleman with a turban in the centre of the picture is Maulana Rahmat Ali, H. A., our Missionary to Java.

The Ahmadiyya Movement

THE Ahmadiyya Movement was founded by Hazrat Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mehdi and the expected Messenger of all nations. In the spirit and power of all the earlier prophets he came to serve and reinterpret the final and eternal teachings laid down by God in the Holy Quran. The Movement therefore represents the true and real Islam and seeks to uplift humanity and establish peace throughout the world. Hazrat Ahmad died in 1908, and the present Head of the Movement is his second successor, Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, under whose direction the Movement has established Missions in many parts of the world, the following being the addresses of some of them:—

(1) THE LONDON MOSQUE, 63, Melrose Road,
Southfields, London, S. W. 18, England.

(2) THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT IN ISLAM,
Sufi M. R. Bengalee, M.A.,
56 E, Congress St., Suite 1307,
Chicago, Illinois, U. S. America.

(3) THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT,
Commercial Road, Salt Pond,
Gold Coast, West Africa.

(4) THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT,
Rose Hill, Mauritius.

(5) THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT,
25-27, Alof Street, Okepopo, Lagos,
Nigeria, W. Africa.

(6) THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT,
Box No. 305, G. P. O.
Perth, W. Australia.

(7) THE CENTRAL (E.A.) AHMADIYYA
MUSLIM ASSOCIATION,
P. O. Box No. 554, Nairobi
(Kenya Colony.)

(8) MAULVI ABUL 'ATA, Maulvi Fazil,
Sharial Burj, Haifa, Palestine.

(9) MAULVI RAHMAT ALI, Oetœsan Ahmadiah,
Defensielijn V/d Bosch, No. 139, Batavia Centrum, Java.

(10) MAULVI MOHD. SADIQ, H.A., Oetœsan Ahmadiah,.
Padang—(Sumatra)

Digitized by Khilafat Library Rabwah

Regd. No. L.-2942

— THE —

REVIEW OF RELIGIONS

(A MONTHLY JOURNAL)

OF SANE RELIGIOUS MUSLIM THOUGHT

DEVOTED TO

THE DIFFUSION AND DISSEMINATION

OF

THE BEAUTIES AND EXCELLENCES

OF

ISLAMIC TEACHING & TORCH-BEARER

OF

THE LIGHT OF ISLAM IN THE WEST.

Gives an Impartial Review of the Prominent Religions of the World and Removes Misconceptions about ISLAM.

Annual Subscription ... *Rs. 4*

All remittances should be sent to the MANAGER,

THE REVIEW OF RELIGIONS (English)

P. O. Qadian, Punjab (India)

Printed at the Ripon Printing Press, Bull Road, Lahore, by Mirza Mohd. Sadiq, and published by Sheikh Abdur Rahman Qadiani for Sadar Anjuman-i-Ahmadiya, Qadian, Punjab, India.

The

Review of Religions

Vol. XXXII FEBRUARY, 1933 No. 2

Digitized by Khilafat Library Rabwah

THE WAY TO PEACE AMONG RELIGIONS

1. The founders and leaders of different religions should not be referred to in a manner which is likely to offend the susceptibilities of their followers.

2. In the propagation of religion, the missionaries of each religion should confine themselves to an explanation of the beauties of their religion and should not attack any other religion. To find faults in other religions does not prove the truth of one's own religion. The truth of a religion can be established only by reference to the superiority of its own teachings and not by reference to the demerits of other religions.

3. The followers of a religion should not ascribe to their religion a doctrine or a teaching which is not directly deducible from their scriptures. Both the doctrine and its proof must be cited from the revealed book of the religion.

4. The advocates of different religions should be required not to confine themselves merely to an abstract explanation of the teachings of their religion, but also to illustrate in practice the results which can be obtained by acting upon those teachings, so that people might be able to judge whether those teachings do or do not lead to any result.

—Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II.

Digitized by Khilafat Library Rabwah

THE VALUE AND AIMS OF ISLAMIC STUDIES

By Mr. Muhammad Aslam B.A. (Cantab).

[The following is the author's inaugural address first delivered by him as first President of The Circle of Islamic Studies which has been founded recently in Lahore, under the auspices of the local Jamaat-i-Ahmadiyya.—*Ed. R. R.*]

I

A circle of studies such as is being inaugurated this evening, requires no lengthy defence. Whatever views we might hold about religion, we would find it difficult—very difficult to deny that religion is a very important affair. The bearing which religion has on human life both individual and social, and the marvellous influence which it has on the whole conduct of man make it imperative and important for us to make a thoughtful study of religion. No doubt philosophy in our time—until perhaps quite lately—has appeared to be quite luke-warm towards religion. Not that it has particularly attacked religion, but that religion has not figured among its most important problems. Its most important problems have been those connected with the possibility and the conditions of certain knowledge, and so on, not questions about God, and those concrete duties which our very existence might have imposed upon us. But I think this attitude of indifference—now more or less dissolving—has been the characteristic of the cleverest men of all times. They have found it easier to pursue recondite philosophical issues, easier to make hair-splitting distinctions, than seriously to investigate the claims which religion makes about the nature of reality, and of man's place and purpose in it. The reason, I think, has been that philosophical discussions have little or no bearing on practical life. We can carry them on, without fearing that a particular answer to a particular question would ever make any difference to our practical life. It would be different with a religious inquiry.

Digitized by Khilafat Library Rabwah

It is possible, if we seriously made such an inquiry, that we might discover certain truths which would place us under certain obligations, require us to do certain things that we would not perhaps naturally like or find it very pleasant to do. The fear that this might be so, keeps us—or so at least I think—from making a serious attempt to understand or evaluate religion. This has been the disability of the cleverest men of all ages and this is the disability of the cleverest men of our time.

II

But just now it seems to be getting different. People are inclined to discuss, talk and hear about religion as they were not disposed to, sometime ago. Perhaps it is the problems of present day civilization which are sending mankind including the intellectual aristocracy to seek light from religion—not having found much prospect of solving those problems with their own unaided wisdom. Perhaps it is the very extension of knowledge —of physics particularly—which is leading to a revival of interest in religion. The most perfect science, we might say, has discovered at long last its fundamental limitations, and is being constrained to think of things it had no mind to think of, before. No doubt, men like Mr. Bertrand Russell are being even more openly and more unequivocally hostile to religion. But their very hostility is evidence of an awakening of interest in religion. For, if there was nothing to disturb their complacence in this regard, they would never have diverted themselves from the harmless and humdrum pursuit of epistemological problems.

However it may be, there is, I think, a certain change in the attitude which intelligent people have towards religion. Many are to-day, as they were not sometime ago, seeking religion as a solvent for their difficulties. Many more are thinking, as they did not think sometime ago, that they still have to settle with religion. Still many more are being interested, as they were not interested sometime ago, in theoretical questions connected with religion, questions about its origin, its validity, its value and so on.

III

An awakened interest in religion can hardly fail to take serious notice of Islam which is, at any rate, one of the most important religions of the world. More than that, it has certain formal features which confer on it an important distinction and make it peculiarly interesting to those who for one reason or another are being driven to the study of religion. Its theoretical grounding, that is, the doctrinal part is very simple. Beyond a certain fundamental spiritual conception of the Universe, of a transcendental, creator God and of the possibility of establishing contact between Him and man, it does not make demands on our understanding which it may be difficult to concede. Then it has a paramount significance for the practical life of man. It has a wonderful genius for putting men under a discipline, in regard both to their individual and social obligations. Lastly it has an undoubted and unequalled historicity. For its philosophical, practical, and historical value Islam is destined to command a very wide, and a very deep interest in the world of to-day and to-morrow.

In the face of such an interest in religion and in Islam, we require no great argument to convince ourselves of the need of a thougtful study of subjects connected with Islam. In fact, if our convictions are to be trusted—and we certainly may trust them – we should have seen it fit to study Islam seriously, even if the world had been as indifferent to it, or for that matter, to religion generally, as it has ever been. The present interest in religion, I describe as the rising of a tide which, if we are mindful, we would take at the flood. And it is important that we did so, because the educated amongst us—whether they are more immediately connected with academic life as most of us here are, or not—the educated amongst us think—falsely, of course—that the West is still indifferent to religion, and as we of the East, like subject peoples throughout history, look to our political masters for a lead in all matters, we continue to be indifferent to religion, whatever our own intelligence might have to tell us in this regard. The reawakening of interest is bound

to come in the East as it has come in the West. It is as well therefore, that we try, it may be in a humble manner, to help this interest to express itself, more quickly and more systematically than it otherwise might.

IV

Once we agree that it is important to discuss and study subjects connected with Islam, as it is important to study all religion, the question arises, what are the broad aims that *we* might keep in view, while *we* study subjects connected with Islam? The question of aims is important in all studies. Nobody, if he really understood his business as a student, would set himself on a study without certain more or less clearly apprehended aims which he would keep steadily before him. True, many sciences, or perhaps many scientists are content with the charting of facts as the facts come their way—and this, I venture to suggest, is true of the infant science of psychology - but such sciences or such scientists do not get very much further forward, with the task of extending important knowledge. The question of aims, therefore, important in scientific studies, is even more important in the study of a religion, such as Islam. For religion is not—or at least it claims that it is not, a mere phenomenon out there to be studied, possibly at leisure, possibly in any way you like. It is a challenge to your scale of values, to your outlook on the world and its problems, and to your whole being. Whether you like or not, you have at least to settle with this challenge, so that you cannot merely study, you have to study religion with a certain aim. You have to direct and define your study so as to be able to settle the issues, which religion raises and to orient yourselves towards problems on which religion has an obvius bearing.

V

With this remark as to the necessity of delineating our aims in studying subjects connected with Islam, I proceed to examine certain aims which by different people are being

cultivated to-day in the study of these subjects. For unless we do so, we cannot arrive at any clear idea as to what *our* aims, in this circle of Islamic studies should be.

The first thing we ought to notice, however, is that it is not so easy to distinguish between the many different aims which inspire students of Islam to-day. The aims are like a web, parts of which run into one another. Only with some effort, may be with some violence, is it possible to divide students of Islam into classes and to label each class with an aim peculiar to itself. Even so we will have to regard this analysis as only a broad one. There would be individuals in each class who would not be representatives of that class and who would naturally, perhaps justly, resent my attribution to them of aims which may inspire a class, but not every individual in that class.

To proceed with classes of students and their aims, however, let me say that, as I see, there are roughly about five different classes of people, Muslim and non-Muslim, who study subjects connected with Islam each with a different aim. These aims we may analyse not with a view to criticise them but rather with a view to help ourselves in the definition of our own aims. For there can hardly be any point in criticising the aims which an individual or a class of individuals may have in a particular study. Everybody is at liberty to conceive his aims in studying Islam from his own point of view, just as we are at liberty to study Islam from our own point of view. The utmost we can suggest as criticism of other people's aims, is to say that they fall short, when and if they do, of certain broad principles which ought to be observed in studyiug any religion, and from any point of view, assuming that we *can* find some such principles. But even this criticism I propose to steer clear of, because it is not quite relevant to my immediate purpose, which is to try to make clear to members of this circle, and others who are likely to participate in its discussions, what our aims in studying Islam should be.

The first of these five classes consists of students of Islam who have travelled in Muslim lands, and who have picked up their knowledge of Islam largely out of their travels. Their one aim has been to supply to the adventurous West, information which will stimulate, still further, its spirit of adventure and provide it with ready experience to deal with Muslims whom they are bound to find abroad. The aim, if I may say so, is part of the general movement on the part of the West to open the East for purposes of commercial, cultural and political enterprise. The studies which this class of students has produced include some of the greatest, even some of the most sympathetic books written on Islam by Western writers, as also some of the meanest and some of the least sympathetic ones. But they are as a class distinguished by the fact that they are studies which one adventurer would offer to would-be adventurers in lands which hold predominant Muslim populations. They are not a serious attempt to understand Islam as such, but largely only information, often well documented and scholarly, which, it is supposed, would help European travellers and administrators to deal with Muslims in the East.

VI.

The second class of students includes Professors of Western Universities who have made it their business to make a systematic study of Islam, in its various departments. Often they have turned to evaluating the claims of Islam, judging it in terms of their own scale of values. But the dominant interest of Professors of Islamic Studies in the West has been to chart down facts of all kinds about Islam. It does not seem to have mattered to these professors whether the facts which they chart down are relevant to the task of evaluating Islam, in respect of such claims as it makes, or in respect of such functions as any religion, in their view, ought to be able to perform. What they care for is facts and more and more facts about Islam; whether those facts relate to obscure points about Arabic roots, Arabic grammar, Arabic philology or they

Digitized by Khilafat Library Rabwah

relate to the more pertinent points in the early history of the Founder of Islam, or of the first four *Khalifas*; whether those facts relate to erudite matters connected with the lives and teaching of the mystics who rose in later Islam or to important ethical precepts which the Founder of Islam inculcated to his followers or practised for their benefit. The charting of facts is to this class, a greater concern than to seek from Islam answers to determinate questions, or to judge the peculiar claims which it makes on its own behalf. True, the aim—charting down of facts—is a great and a valuable one, but it is well for us to note the orientation of mind it involves. In one word, I may describe it as obscurantist and encyclopædic, not practical and relevant.

VII

The third class of students of Islam consists of Christian Missionaries who consider Islam as only an important obstacle in the way of the propagation of Christianity and study it in order to provide Christian inquirers in the West with information about Islam, and would-be Christian Missionaries with advice how to tackle Muslim populations as also individual Muslim disputants. It is not for me to question whether much of what the missionaries teach is really accurate information. But I think, a certain class of missionary writers is certainly misinformed. I was privileged to know in Cambridge, a distinguished Englishman, an ex-Professor of one of the provincial universities of England, and one who had recently come back home from an extensive lecture tour in India. In the course of the very first talk I had with him, he told me like a child that according to Islam woman had no soul. Returning to my rooms from my visit to him, I sent him, the late Sir Thomas Arnold's (not my own) rendering of a verse of the Quran which said without distinction that the believing *men* as well as the believing *women* would reap the rewards of their deeds in heaven. My friend acknowledged the correction with thanks, but it is surprising how he ever came to entertain the error which I found it was my duty to correct. He was

an intelligent, widely read, well travelled gentleman, and we should find it impossible to get at the sources of his misinformation about Islam—shared, I know, very widely all over the West—unless we assume that he must have, while very young, assimilated it from a certain class of missionary writers on Islam.

Apart from such drawbacks, the missionary writings sometimes offer good observational material. The late Bishop Lefroy's descriptions of the unostentatious, yet impressive character of Muslim prayers—individual or congregational—are both interesting and important. So are many others. We may note, however, that the aim of the missionary is different from all other Western students of Islam in that he is above all critical. He is not interested in charting facts of all kinds, but facts only of one kind. He is constantly judging and evaluating Islam, though his evaluation is always or nearly always negative, and always or nearly always, as we believe, wrongly argued out or misinformed.

There is evidence, however, of a tendency towards moderation among missionaries, as also of a tendency to value first hand information. As an example of the first, I may mention the tribute which in the course of a recent meeting in Lahore Dr. Ahrens, a distinguished Professor of the Forman Christian College, paid to the sincerity and single-mindedness of the Holy Founder of Islam. As an example of the second, I may mention the case of the Henry Martyn School of Islamic Studies whose directors, I understand, have on several occasions sought and obtained professing Mussalmans to talk to their school on subjects connected with Islam.

VIII

The fourth class of students who have made it their concern to study Islam, is made up of orthodox Muslims for whom scholastic tradition has prescribed certain subjects which they study uncritically, and in which much the greater part of their attention is devoted to Arabic Grammar, Greek Logic,

Muslim Law, and pre-Islamic Literature. The tradition which has prescribed this syllabus dates back from the reign of Alamgir I, during whose reign a certain Maulvi Nizam-ud-Din of Sihali, near Lucknow, founded the well-known Lucknow Arabic School called "The Firanghi Mahal." The syallabus which is still adhered to by orthodox students all over India, was first introduced by Maulvi Nizam-ud-Din at Firanghi Mahal, and was later copied by Muslim Madrassahs in India. While the three aims we have so far examined are distinguished either by a solicitude for facts, or by a solicitude for criticism, the aim of the orthodox studies is characterised by neither.

Earlier, when the British began to administer law and order in India, the men trained in these courses were useful members of the administration, as they helped to instruct British judges on points of Muslim law. But later, when the administration began to be filled more and more with English knowing Indians, men with mere oriental learning were thrown out of respectable employment. After long years of trial and error, and as a result of representations and counter-representations, it was agreed to graft Islamic Studies on to the ordinary courses in the new Universities, and to put them in the charge of Arabic scholars trained in European methods of research and reconstruction. The Darsi-i-Nizamia, however, was allowed to continue to be pursued and is, in fact, still pursued as a separate line of studies in several places in India, and sometimes as a part of university education. Among the Islamic intelligentsia, Islamic studies ever since they were grafted on to the general work of the universities have been inspired largely by Professors of Islamic subjects in the Western Universities and are more or less controlled by the aims of those professors—such as I have tried to delineate before you. Outside the Universities they are a continuance of the Nizamia tradition. I have said something about the aims of European professors already. About the Nizamia tradition I want to say that it may have performed a useful function in the past, but to-day, as uncitrical conservatism in a world of ever-new ideas, it has become a tradition of

ponderous and irrelevant learning, and an institution of intellectual and religious inertia. The Quran is not directly studied, according to this tradition, so the interpretation of Islam is dependant not on its own certain and original source, but on later exegeses, a fact which has marked out the *ulema* of the old tradition, for their intelorance and their unconvincing adherence to interpretations received at the best from those who, in their time, were only about as able to interpret Islam as we are in ours.

IX

The fifth, but not the least important class of students is represented by those who like the orthodox students of Islam are working outside the universities or, if they are formally connected with universities are relatively independent of the mere fact-gathering aims of European orientalists. This class has a genuine love for Islam and its teaching, and its aim is to glorify the past of Islam by well documented research. The examples of this school are the Dairatul Maarif at Azamgarh, the Darun Nadwah at Lucknow, and the Islamic Research Institute at Lahore. The third, though inspired by the same aims, is not, however, as old or as well established as either of the other two. Altogether this school of Islamic studies is characterised by enlightenment and leadership. Muslim intelligentsia when they would study any subject conneced with Islam, would turn to the vast quantity of first-grade literature which this school has produced.

The interest of this school, however, is so great in the reconstruction of the past, that the larger aim of finding the answers which Islam would give to questions which arise in the present, or questions which are going to arise in the immediate future is almost completely obscured. In its fact-finding ambition it is hardly the inferior of the European professors of oriental subjects, but these ambitions are directed not to an interpretation and evaluation of Islam in relation to the world of to-day and the world of to-morrow, but to a reconstruction of the past history and achievements of Islam.

The reconstruction is always a legitimate glorification of the past, and this glorification is righty extended to the modern cultural representatives of Islam such as Shibli and Iqbal. The glorification of the leaders of Muslim culture, however, seems to be pursued as though it were an end in itself. Take as an example, the poet Sir Muhammad Iqbal. By common consent, Iqbal is one of the greatest poets of our time. His thought expressed as beautifully and as effectively perhaps as any philosopher-poet has done before, has deep significance for the problems not only of Muslim India, or of Muslim Asia but of the whole of the Muslim world. In the praise which is poured on Iqbal's poetry and thought, however, it is often forgotten, that the teaching of Iqbal is designed above all as a glorification of Islam or, for that matter, of all religion. He professes faith in God and the efficacy of Muslim teaching which people far less learned, for less thoughtful and far less gifted are shy of acknowledging. If glorification of our cultural leaders were not our only object, there would have been some serious attention given to the deliberate teaching of Iqbal about God and other cognate matters. Instead of that Iqbal has had mere applause given to him. All kinds of people join in admiring him ; people who accept as well as people who do not, or only pretend to accept the religious teaching of Iqbal ; people who wish to take the practical consequences of Iqbal's poetry and philosophy seriously as well as people who would take it only lightly. If this is possible, it can only be because the concern of the enlightened Muslim of to-day is more to admire his intellectual heroes, and less to study them with a view to find out, whatever of value it is possible to find out, in their lives and works in terms of the practical problems of to-day and to-morrow. Questions about God and His dealings with man, about the commercial, social and political ethics of Islam are all questions to which writings like those of Iqbal are of very great relevance. The entire business of formulating these questions and of finding answers to them, however is being forgotten in the enthusiasm for glorifying the great.

This school of Islamic studies, therefore, would enhance the value of its work many times over, if it were oriented towards

these studies in a slightly different manner. It looks far too much to the past, and not always to the most relevant (*i.e.*, the earliest part of it), when the greater need is to look to the present and to the future. It glorifies the great when the greater need is squarely to ask them of such guidance as they can give.

X

Having examined possible aims, what shall we say about our own aims in undertaking Islamic studies, on the small scale, on which alone it will be possible for us to pursue them ?

The anwer to this question has already been given by implication in the analysis which I have suggested of existing aims of Islamic studies. The observant traveller in Muslim lands, could enable us to see ourselves, as others see us, equally as he would enable us at times to catch him in the act of slandering us. More than this, there would be no relevance for us in his studies of Islam. The European orientalist would inspire us to habits of precision and of systematic and patient research. We could, also, acquire from him the love of facts for their own sake, though we would not cultivate this love beyond a certain degree. The study of facts in our plan would be best subordinated to the study of problems. For we would approach our studies with determinate questions in our minds, not with mere curiosity. We would pay adequate attention to what the Christian missionary may have to say about Islam, for not without adverse comments could we understand and appreciate our own attitude towards Islam.

We would take pains over reconstructing the relevant past of Islam, but always with a view to evaluate Islam. We would study the past not merely and vaguely to inspire ourselves in the present but also and primarily to adjust ourselves to it. We would study our intellectual heroes but in order to wrest from them things of value to our practical life.

We would not forget that it is easier to cultivate poetry and philosophy—things which make no practical demand on us—than to cultivate the serious study of religion which is always and above all a challenge to action. Our first care in studying religion would be to study it in reference to its peculiar claim and its peculiar purpose. We would remember that the declared function of religion is to guide mankind to the highest values. We would be continually examining this claim in order never to deceive ourselves.

Digitized by Khilafat Library Rabwah

There are many problems in the modern world about our social, economic, and political duties on which the most vigorous thought is required, and which challenge both the intelligence and conscience of modern man. These, we would submit to religion in order to let it illumine them for us.

We are no doubt convinced that Islam provides satisfactory solutions to these problems. But we would require a more accurate assessment of world facts, as well as a more firm grasp of the Muslim teaching before we can be really ready to receive and pass on to others the illumination which Islam can afford us.

And it will not merely be the problems of marriage, of society, of industry, and of war what we would submit to religion. There would be the wider problems of the nature of religion itself that we would submit to religion. Many of you would know that psychologists and anthropologists keep worrying about the origin of religion. Some say it arose in man's sense of loneliness in the face of a cruel nature. Others say it was invented by man as a compensation for the renunciations imposed on his instincts by the constraints of a social life. Still others say that it was a device of the rich, foisted on the poor, in order that the rich may keep rich, and the poor content with poverty. We cannot settle with these fanciful suggestions except by studying religion—a particular religion to be exact—in the process of laying its first foundations? And which religion will be more appropriate—considering its undoubted

historicity, and its obvious individuality, which religion would be more appropriate for such study than Islam ?

However, therefore, we may conceive our task, there is a wide and a promising field before us. Properly directed, our efforts though small may yield to us great results, and if we keep before us the true aims of our studies, we are bound to have the necessary direction for our efforts. All we would then need is hope and courage to keep us at our endeavours.

Digitized by Khilafat Library Rabwah

SIR P. C. RAY ON ISLAM

Islam is the most democratic of all religions. It is the perfect equalizer of humanity. The moment you embrace Islam, you are raised to a footing of equality with any member. In the mosque, the Badshah (King), the Amir (Rich), the Faqir (Beggar), the Bahishti (Water-carrier), and the meanest of coolies (Labourer) pray side by side. Islam knows nothing about distinctions of colour. Islam has made universal progress from the borders of the Pacific Ocean to those of the Atlantic on account of its liberal policy. Then again within recent times Islam has been making gigantic strides in the Malay Peninsula not on account of the sword or the Koran—these parts have never been under Muslim rule—but because of its catholic and liberal policy.

—"*Unity*"

Digitized by Khilafat Library Rabwah

WHO BURNT THE ALEXANDRIA LIBRARY—I

(MUHAMMAD HUSSAIN, B. COM.)

Tooth of Calumny

Green with jealousy of the victories of the ever-conquerring horns of the Crescent, the followers of the Cross have always breathed fire and brimstone against the Holy Prophet, (Peace and blessings of God be upon him!) his Caliphs and o her celebrities of Islam. In most of their writings we find the tooth of calumny at work. Islam's territorial supremacy was in the zenith during the Caliphate of Hazrat Omar. Dazzled by his personality and stung by his truimphant career, the Christian writers have made him the target of their virulent scandals, and have in vain tried to detract from his glory. The most notorious scandal is that of the burning of the Alexandrian Library. It has been counterblasted and exposed in its stark nakedness at the bar of History and Reason, as many times as its sponsors have tried to revive it. In the light of the copious and convincing answers given in this periodical as well as in other books by well-known Muslim writers, one would have thought that the scandal had been given its final burial and that the slandering tongues would wag no more. But blind prejudice is no respector of reason and a jaundiced eye is past all cure. The hydra-headed monster of sophistry has defied the Herculean arm of the Muslim Scholars.

Christians' New Ally

The detractors of Islam have found a new ally in the Hindus, who have proferred their hands to draw Christian chestnuts from fire. This offer, generous though it appears, is attributable to the hostile feelings which they themselves cherish against Islam. Defeated and worsted in battles with Muslims, subjugated and reduced to the position of vassals by the Muslim rulers and suffered to partake of their benignity and generosity as toadies and

sycophants, the Hindus have no less cause than the Christians to chafe and smart under the lash of the poignant recollections of the victorious and irresistable march of Islam. It was in a mortified tone that Dr. C. V. Raman—the well-known winner of the Nobel Prize—reiterated the hackneyed charge of incendiarism against Hazrat Omar. The Doctor must have taken his audience by storm by the unfeigned display of a hide-bound communalism. The attack coming, as it does, from an expected quarter, forms the *raison de-tre* of broaching the subject which has already received lurid lights from mightier pens than mine.

Why and Wherefore of the Charge

Before exposing its falsity I would like to analyse the why and wherefore of the charge, and how it lingered on and outlived the revelation of facts by well-known European Scholars and Historians as Thomas Carlyle, Gibbon, Godfrey and Renan. When we rummage and ransack the past record we find the existence of many scandals against Islam but not a trace of the one under discussion, till the beginning of the Crusades. This cock-and-bull story, to give the story its privileged title, came to a head when Sultan Salah-ud-din was on the crest of the the wave of his triumphs. Those were the heydays of Saracenic civilization and culture. But the whole of Europe was sunk in the Cimmerian darkness of ignorance. The barbarians of Europe were in great awe of the conquerring hordes of Islam. Their contact with the Muslims opened their eyes (though not their minds) to the excellences and superiorities of Islam. Burning with envy, and afraid no doubt of the impact of Islamic culture, they began to cast aspersions on the Muslim kings and concoct tales of their supposed vandalism. One cannot but admire the ingenuity of the man who accused Hazrat Omar of burning the Alexandrian Library, by fabricating a story which has no basis in History. It was a mere figment of his imagination. But it provided a hook for the Christian writers to hang their coats on. It was picked up and was given wide currency, so much so, that it became a fire-side gossip. The Christian wire-pullers were quite aware of the flimsy stuff of their yarn. Hence they were very quick in exploiting the ignorance

Digitized by Khilafat Library Rabwah

of the masses. They thought and rightly so, that once instilled and ingrained in the bone and marrow of the " Great unwashed ", it would be next to impossible to eradicate it. No historical proofs, however convincing, would disabuse the popular mind of this delusion. In short, the net was laid wisely and invisibly. Some sane and sober historians after years of sifting the sands of history, alighted upon the true fact, and revealed the falsehood of the charge. But popular prejudices die hard. Popular mind succumbs more easily to the tactics of the itinerant leg-pullers than to the words of scholars who pass their lives in aloofness. There is always a hiatus between the scholars and the surging masses. Carlyle's explicit contradiction of the cobwebs of falsehood woven round Islam in his *Hero and Hero-worship* and *Farrar's* open and unreserved confession of the baselessness of the story about the Alexandria Library, cannot infilterate the stone-wall of ignorance; hence the continued existence of some transparent false-hoods among the masses.

Origin of the Charge

The story which constitutes the basis for the libellous attacks on Hazrat Omar is traceable to Abul Fragius, an Armenian historian. He was born in 1226 A. D., that is, 600 years after the conquest of Egypt by *Amr-Ibn-al-As.* He wrote a book in Syriacs and also wrote a summary of it in Arabic and entitled it *Mukhtasaruddaul.* In 1662 Dr. Pocock, Professor of Latin at Oxford University, rendered it into Latin. It is in this Latin Summary of the Syriac original that the story of the alleged burning of the Alexandria Library is given. The story runs as follows: " At the time of Arab conquest of Egypt under *Amar-Ibn-al-As* as acting under the guidance of Caliph Omar at Medina, there was a man, John the Grammarian. He met Amr, the general of the Muslim army and impressed him with the vastness of his learning. He begged the general's favour of kindly sparing those things which were useless to him. On being asked to explain what he was driving at, he plainly told, that he meant the books of 'wisdom' kept in the Imperial treasuries. At this Amr said that he

could not deal with anything independently of the Caliph's permission. He wrote to the Caliph regarding the matter. Back came the reply, that if the books referred to, agreed with the Quran, they were useless, if not they were undersirable and should be destroyed. On receipt of this reply Amr had no other alternative but to abide by the Caliph's command. He distributed the books among the Alexandrian baths to be used as fuel.

At the Bar of History

Such is the story which was taken up as a coign of vantage to scandalize Hazrat Omar. It was Abul Fraguis, a Christian historian, who started this hare. The story has no historical background, because no library worth the name existed at the time of the Arab conquest of Egypt. History tells us of two libraries that existed at one time or another in Alexandria. The first library was founded by Ptolemy Soter. But it reached the stage of completion during the reign of his successor — Philadelphus, who sent messengers to different countries to collect books of worth and value for the Library which was then housed in a part of the building known Museum. In the year 48 B. C. Cæsar Roman General was hemmed on all sides in Bruchion quarter. He ordered to burn down the harbour. The conflagration that ensued consumed the Library along with the whole building. Gibbon and Draper bear out this fact in their writings. Even M. Renan, the French speaker of great note, and a hostile critic of Islam in his lecture on "Islam and Science", delivered at Paris University in 1883, declared that the Alexandria Library was consigned to flames long before the Muslims' advent into Egypt. It would be the heigh of brazen-facedness to turn a blind eye to this unsolicited testimony of this well-known scholar.

The second was the Serapium Library. It was doomed to extinction at the hands of the red-hot Christians. Emperor Theodsius in the exuberance of his fanaticism perpetrated thousand and one cruelties on pagans. Egged on in his activities by Theopillus, who then wielded the sceptre of ecclesiastical

Digitized by Khilafat Library Rabwah

authority, he ordered to lay seige to the temple of Serapis. It was the last straw on the camel's back. The pagans got exasperated. The inflammatory speeches by their philospher, Olympus, added fuel to the fire. They shut themselves in the temple and with the energy of dispair put up a strong resistance to the Christian beseigers. The war of attrition took a dramatic turn when the emperor ordered the complete annihilation of idols at Alexandria. The Christians' fury knew no bounds. The beseiged in their dismay, ran away leaving the temple at the tender mercies of the beseigers. "The valuable Library of Alexandria was pillaged and destroyed and nearly twenty years after, the appearance of empty shelves excited the regret and indignation of every spectator whose mind was not darkened by religious prejudice."

Gibbon in his 'Roman Empire' makes mention of Alexandria as a flourishing town inhabited by heterogenous elements. He writes of a quarrel which arose among the inhabitants, which assumed serious proportions and lasted for several years. Many buildings were razed to the ground and for one hundred years the town presented bleak look of wilderness. This impartial account goes to show that before the advent of Muslims Alexandria had undergone disastrous vicissitudes. Is it not more than probable that this bloody warfare which spread over several years and which brought in its wake appalling loss of life and property, might also have sounded the death-knell of the Library, which is foolishly asserted to have been destroyed by the Muslims ?

In the light of these irrefutable proofs, Abul Fragius' story dwindles into a false 'scoop' or an historian's canard, bolstered up on purpose to distort and caricature the facts of history.

More Sidelights on the Story.

The truth of the story is seriously challenged by the silence of the historians who lived before Abul Fragius.

They have left over-drawn pictures of the rapacity and ravages of Muslim hordes. The enormous tragedy of burning so gigantic a library as that of Alexandria could not, if it had any basis, have escaped their Argus eye. They have given detailed accounts of the conquest of Egypt and its after-maths but not a hint about the alleged outrage.

Gibbon succeeded to win to his side group of writers who after his historical revelation spinned the whole story as the histories of Abul Fragius. But there were others who hugged their falsehood to their bosom and did not part with it. They maintain that three other writers besides Abul Fragius had written of the supposed catastrophe. They are Almakrizi, Haji Khalifa and Abdul Latif. Almakrizi can best be left out of account, because he in the first volume of his book, under the heading, *Amud-al-Sawari*, quotes Abdul Latif word for word. He has no opinion of his own to offer.

I first take up Haji Khalifa. The Christian writers have been wise enough not to quote chapter and verse from Haji Khalifa's writings. Had they done so, they would have been hoisted with their own petard. A French ڈساسی Professor who in his vehemence to substantiate the charge has contributed to the unrolling of the skein of misrepresentation by quoting the exact words of Haji Khalifa. Their English rendering is as follows : " In the early days of Islam the Arabs were indifferent to all sciences except Lexicography, Theology and Medicine. They were attended to merely because common people stood in need of them. The reason of it was that the rules and beliefs of Islam had not attained that soundness which would have withstood the onslaughts of the Science developed by scientists. It is said that the Muslims after their conquest of cities destroyed all books which fell into their hands."

Even a superficial reading of the above passage reveals the fact that the author is not referring to any historical event.

It is his individual opinion which lacks the weight and substance of a historical fact. To crown all, there is no mention of *the* Alexandria Library To pounce upon it and make it the basis of self-evident lies, would be the notorious example of wish being the father to the thought. Now let us turn to what Abdul Latif writes. Describing a pillar under the heading of *Amud-al-Sawari*, Abdul Latif writes, " It is said that of all the pillars there is one which supported the porch of Aristotle who taught philosophy, that it was a school of learning and it housed a library which was burnt by 'Amr at the instance of the Caliph." The critics have clutched at the statement to belittle the glory of Caliph Omar. But it is a weak reed to lean upon. Abdul Latif begins it with ﻳﻘﺎل which at best can be rendered into English as " it is said ". Can a dubious and ambiguous wording as the above settle a question which bristles with controversy ? Can a writer who, as his words show, is in a mental twilight, be a competent authority ? It is an irony of fate that Christian writers, who otherwise claim to be historical purists content themselves with few and feeble statements and base their whole criticism on them. Perhaps to them every stick is good enough to beat the Muslims.

The *Spectator* (a well-known London literary paper) in its issue of June 13, 1911 has nailed the whole lie to the mast. It condemns Abdul Latif's statement as a tissue of misrepresentations, because Aristotle never was there and there was no porch which he could use as his school of philosophy. Hence the concluding portion of the statement is as much a flambouyant lie as the whole of it. The statement smacks of irresponsibility which ill-becomes a passage purported to be historical evidence.

The fact that neither Abdul Latif nor Haji Khalifa was an historian, knocks the bottom out of the whole criticism. The detractors of Hazrat Omar have cut off their nose to sipte their face, by taking their stand on the flimsy and equivocal attempt of those who could not boast of the slighest

Digitized by Khilafat Library Rabwah

reputation as historians. Abdul Latif was a physician, and Haji Khalifa was the author of *Kashfuzunoon* (Index of Islamic books). They have no *locus standi* in a controversial matter of history. Hence their stray remarks made in an irresponsible vein hold no water with unbiassed students of history. It is more so when we do not come across any hint about the Alexandria Library in standard books as *Fatoohul-Buldan*, *Bilazree*, *Tabri* and *Tarikh-i-Yaqoobi*, which are standard books on history and which give comprehensive and exhaustive account even of the minor events which came to pass. Their grim silence about the matter is a standing challenge to the veracity of Abdul Latif's statement, whose tell-tale weakness gives a direct lie to those who have made much of it and have built a shaky structure upon it. It would not be out of place to mention that some European writers have betrayed gross ignorance of the elementary facts of history. They assert that Ibn-Khaldoon has quoted the story of Abul Fragius in his account of Hazrat Omar. It is an outrage of the darkest hue, because nowhere in Ibn Khaldoon we find even a single syllable about the supposed conflagration.

Perhaps our critics might say that the authors of the Histories quoted were all Muslims and that they observed discreet silence over a matter which to them was a family question. But even this contention, plausible though it seems, has no legs to stand upon. It cannot stand a moment's scrutiny. Not a few historians of their own flesh and blood have either spurned the whole accusation as a glaring humbug, and a rank calumny, or have belied it with a grim silence. Al-Makin who lived 200 years before the notorious author of the story (Abul Fragius) has not a word to say about the Alexandria Library in his detailed history of Egypt which he wrote when he was there. Poscus who died in 940 was *albatrik* in Alexandria. He has left us an exhaustive treatise on Alexandria, but the mention of the alleged incendiarism is conspicuous by its absence. Even among the modern writers on Islam Ramsay Muir is an evengalist of great note. He

has written reams about Islam. In his book on Caliphate he is silent on the matter. Would the detractors of Islam say that they all have entered into a conspiracy of silence ? The writers who have not failed to lay their fingers even on a slight imaginary weakness in any Caliph or a Muslim king could not be expected to ignore or lightly pass over an event whose monstrosity is beyond description.

(To be continued)

Digitized by Khilafat Library Rabwah

CHRISTIANITY AND DIVORCE.

(By Maulvi Muhammad Din, B.A., a former Muslim Missionary in America.)

There was a time within living memory when the Moslems were openly taunted for having loose marriage laws, that they severed their matrimonial bonds on trivial grounds and that marriage tie among them was not accorded the sanctity that it deserved. For sometimes Christian propaganda took such an intensive form that Moslem gentlemen, educated on the western lines, and consequently overawed by Christian missionary influence, had to adopt apologetic tones to explain away the divorce system as propounded by Islam. Strange as it might seem these Moslem apologists did not notice which way the wind had set in in the West and that voices were being raised louder and louder, to end the iniquitous tyranny exercised so long by the Christian Church over public opinion. As a matter of fact the Christian West has gone so far ahead in demanding absolute release from the dominance of the Church in the matter of divorce that the latter has to search for apologists who should try to defend Jesus against the attacks of rationalism. A majority of the professing Christains now openly declare that Jesus did not mean what he said and that had he been alive now he would have certainly raised his voice in favour of divorce. The only Christian country where the Church has some sort of feeble resistance still to offer is England and it is with the *Fight for Divorce* in England that the book with the above name deals and it is in connection with that that we have something to say here.

The book in question "is an attempt to present the story of the conflict in a popular form". It "approaches the subject from the point of view of the general reader. It avoids as far as possible both legal and theological technicalities, but gives a

straightforward history of the question from the beginning of the Christian era to the present day. It traces the story of the conflict between the Church and the reformers. It shows how the Church developed this doctrine of indissolubility of marriage on fictitious grounds and how it still plays fast and loose with it." Last of all the book summarises the arguments in favour of divorce for the benefit of the Church of England people.

Before I summarise the views of the writer in the light of Islamic teachings, I must add here a word of caution. The writer it appears belongs to the free-thinking school of Christians, a modernist as we might call him. Hence it is impossible to expect from him any free criticism of Jesus or his teachings which I think is good on the whole, for personally I would not give free reins to my pen or my thoughts, however tempted I might be, against any great teacher of mankind, much less against Jesus whom every right-minded man must accord a position of great honour and veneration in the innermost recesses of his thoughts, for he has been one of the greatest benefactors of humanity. Yet without the slightest slight or derogation to the memory of any great teacher of the past or present one can reasonably discuss a principle or problem in view of the accumulated knowledge of mankind and without meaning any disrespect in thought or word one can agree to differ from this or that teacher. That I believe is the view which will find a ready favour with every reasonable person. Of course a little modification of this view would be necessary in the case of a divinely inspired teacher who stands on a different footing, but then as among the various divine teachers one shall have to hold the scales even, tipping them only in favour of one whose views hold the field and who is the recipient of divine revelation *par-excellence.*

Yet I had thought that as the writer was discussing the subject from the common-sense point of view he would take care to shed off that undue glossing over the words of Jesus which all Christians are prone to do. For instance I had expected that the writer who holds such strong and pronounced views

on marriage would deprecate the attribution to Jesus of views regarding the married state as the perfect stage in which a man and woman could live, for nowhere does Jesus say so, though as we shall see later on he intended to see people who had married united for better or for worse as far as possible. I mean to say that Jesus attached much greater importance to divine celibacy than to marriage though of course he did favour the latter to a very great extent. Yet when it came to choosing between the one or other he would and did prefer celibacy. A careful perusal of the first twelve lines of 'Matthew' chapter XIX, would, I believe, made it quite clear that Jesus meant exactly what I have said above, for we read that when the disciples found that their Master, Jesus, was not in favour of the lax and loose kind of divorce then in vogue among the Jews they naturally concluded that it was better for them not to run the risk of marriage. "If the case of man be so with his wife," they said, "it is not good to marry." To which Jesus not only replies approvingly in the affirmative, but that this state of unmarriedness he attributed to a special divine grace, for he says that "there be eunuchs which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake". Of course he realizes the difficulty of the ordinary mortal who cannot fully appreciate the blessedness of the eunuchism in the way of the Lord, for he prefaces his remarks by the words that "all men can not receive this saying save they to whom it is given." Hence it is clear that though ordinary souls may not indulge in this supreme blessedness and heavenly luxury, yet it is an admitted fact that Jesus regarded it, that is, celebacy as a special grace for his disciples, for elsewhere in the same gospel he is recorded to have said that "it was only given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" and not unto others.

Digitized by Khilafat Library Rabwah

In the face of such a stress on the blessed eunuchness it ill-becomes the writer to foist the whole blame for the prevailing cult of celibacy upon Paul. It was not Paul who originated this asceticism. It was Jesus who extolled it so high as to make it the special heritage of his disciples or those who followed in their footsteps. I suppose it was Jesus who set the

ball rolling and who by his own example and precept encouraged celebacy and asceticism. The extraordinary claim set up by Paul that whatever he taught was not 'after' any other man 'but by the revelation of Jesus Christ', though he had not seen or met the latter in flesh, was not at all unjustifiable, for his teaching in this behalf exactly coincides with his Master's. "It is absolutely wrong to assert that he did not write in the spirit of a disciple of Christ but of an Early Father. He did not swerve even a hair's breadth from the letter as well as the spirit of his Master's quoted words and in fact he lived his Master's life, immitating the latter in the minutest details of life so that his asceticism and celibacy was but a duplicate of his Master's. It is good for a man not to touch a woman"; or "it is good for the unmarried and widows to 'abide even as I'" says Paul, and herein he is faithful in letter as well as in spirit to what Jesus had declared approvingly in answer to the unanimous dictum of his disciples, 'it is not good to marry.' I should suppose that Jesus's approval of this negative statement is more emphatic and declaratory than if he had made a mere positive statement, for the negative takes away all chance of gloss or explanation. What is still more astonishing is that such a belief and practice Jesus attributes to especial divine grace and favour. To assert that Christ's ideal was marriage and not celibacy is a real misconstruction if not the distortion of his teachings. If Paul regarded marriage as a necessary evil it was not because he thought it so, but because he was giving a faithful interpretation to his Master's words who held celibacy as a divine gift reserved only for himself and his own elect.

Digitized by Khilafat Library Rabwah

It is no doubt true that 'the companionship which is found in happy marriages did mean nothing to Paul' nor do I think that 'love as understood by modern men or women meant anything to him,' "for he saw nothing in it except a provision of the sexual cravings" but the same remark could with greater force and appositeness be applied to Jesus who is the fountain head of all this innovation. I cannot see anything objectionable in Paul which could not be brought home

against Jesus. I would have felt a greater respect for the author had he the moral courage to bracket Jesus with Paul, but in the present circumstances I am afraid it is too much to expect of him, since with all its vaunted freedom of thought or expression the West is still as much idolatrous in its worship of Jesus as it ever was during the darkest ages of its history. It is refreshing however to learn from the writer that the gospels are not the contemporary reports, that the originals disappeared long ago, that the earliest extant manuscripts date from a much later period, at least three hundred years later, that the copyists did add or interpolate something as all scholars agree, that gospel stories are not gospel truths and that the evangelists differ a good deal not only among themselves but give conflicting accounts which makes the whole thing untrustworthy. Why not exonerate Paul on the same ground ? The writer does it of course, but only after he has thoroughly condemned him for his *unChrist-like* views. Yet it was this view of the Christian scriptures that Islam had been advocating for the last thirteen centuries and a half but it always met with scant appreciation and much denunciation on the part of the Western Scholars.

So far we have dealt with the marital aspect of the question, since divorce arises out of marriage. How are we to interpret the pronouncements of Jesus with regard to marriage as well as divorce ? We admit that he was a messenger of God and that he was the anointed one, raised specially for the regeneration of man, reconciling him with his Creator. I think we can easily understand his point of view if we can easily get at his position. It is not merely that his pronouncements were addressed to the Jews only as the writer suggests, though that is very plain to all students of the gospels, but the much more important fact that the mission of Jesus was only confined to the Jews—in fact he was a Jewish teacher whose teachings were meant for the people of his own day. That is no mere assertion on my part, for Jesus himself declares that he was sent only for the lost sheep of Israel and that he emphasised this aspect of the teaching in a

rather unseemly manner. To give point to his Jewish pride he did not hesitate to call all the non-Jews by the approbrious titles of *dogs* and *swines*. He would not at first send his disciples to the Smaritans, although they belonged to the old Jewish stock that lived in the hilly parts of Palestine but were thus cut off for long from the plain dwellers. But later on when during the course of his journeys in the land he came across these people he was convinced of their Jewish origin and so he lifted his ban against them. Yet all through his life he observed that rigid exclusiveness which is the special trait of the Jewish nation. I know that my Christian friends would not fall in with my view, for they can say that though at first he adopted the exclusive Jewish attitude towards the *gentiles*, yet towards the end of his career especialy when he was on the point of being " received up in heaven " he is said to have commanded his disciples to carry his message to all the nations and this they can reasonably assert to be the final teaching of Jesus. I think I should be the first to acknowledge it if I were ever convinced that the last chapters of all the gospels particularly Mark and Matthew were genuine documents which they are not and the fact is admitted by every orthodox Christian. Hence the fact remains that Jesus was a Jewish teacher who maintained that his teachings were meant for the Jews only. That is the first reservation which we must bear in mind in order to understand his teachings.

Another point worth remembering in this connection is the fact that Jesus is not propounding a new theory or a special principle of his own, but that he is merely answering a question. Of course the propunding of a new teaching implies dealing with the question in all its bearings. A good teacher will of course take care to cover all the ground and discuss it at length and thus develop his own new principle. But Jesus does no such thing. There is a mental reservation behind his words while the statement is very carefully hedged in by the remark that originally it was not so, and that it was only on account of the hard-heartedness of the Jews that Moses permitted the giving of the bill of divorcement. To understand his attitude towards this question we must know

the background not only of his mind but also of his interpellators. Not only were there at that time two schools of thought among the Jews about this question of divorce, but that his own disciples too seem to be divided. This question was put to him first by the Pharisees and then by the disciples. "Is it lawful for a man" they asked "to put away his wife."

Digitized by Khilafat Library Rabwah

Matthew's version contains the words "for every cause" at the end of the question. The Evangelists, no doubt, bring in the words of "tempting him" on the part of the Pharisees. That may be right, for these dialecticians were constantly heckling him to put him in the wrong with the people in general, but the fact that even the disciples were tempted to put him this question shows that a mighty controversy was agitating the people of those days to which his disciples too could not be indifferent listeners. A casual reader of the history of those days knows that there were two schools of thought among the Jews, the school of Hillel and the school of Shammai, and the difference of opinion arose about the points of law. Hillel was in favour of a wide laxity in favour of divorce. He thought that under the Mosaic law a man could divorce his wife if he did not like her. Shammai on the other hand was very strict in the interpretation of the same law and by *uncleanness* he thought was meant only 'adultery'. His attitude towards this question was just what Jesus adopted later on. That this question on the part of the Pharisees or his disciples referred only to the interpretation of the Mosaic law is also evident from the way Jesus replied. He did not say off-hand that he abolished the Mosaic law which had held good upto his time. He could not do so, for he himself had declared that not a jot or tittle of the law should pass away till all was fulfilled and that he had come to fulfil and not to abolish. In his constant heckling by the Pharisees he would invariably refer them to the law. Interpretation of course he sometimes did put differently, but that is the domain where so many had differed before and where everyone is entitled to differ according to his lights.

Why so much fuss, then, has then been made over the words of Jesus? It is mainly due to the mistaken attribution of finality to the words of Jesus. They could never be so far finality rests, if ever it did, with the law and not with its interpretation. Jesus was no law-giver. He never arrogated that position to himself. He tried meticulously to carry out the requirements of the law, but he emphasised the spirit of the law as against the Jewish tendency of letter-worship at the expense of the spirit. And if he found that the letter of the law was being abused so that on trivial grounds men were putting away their helpless wives, he thought it high time to sound a note of warning. But he was in no sense laying down the law, for that had already been done. I have no doubt the author is right in maintaining that the sayings of Jesus as reported by the Evangelists are not trustworthy for, besides being contradictory they have no historical basis. But I would add that were it taken for granted that they were historically well-founded and that even if all contradictions could be resolved, even then it would be unwise to accept his dictum as of universal application, for he was a Jew, and the question asked pertained only to the interpretation of the Jewish law and practise. In his answer he refers them to the old law which Moses had amplified. And his audience was wholly Jewish. Therefore his dictum was modified by the circumstances of the case, and that its applicability was circumscribed by the times, circumstances, the locality, and the national characteristics of the Jews.

(To be continued)

THE MAIN OBJECT

(DR. M. M. SADIQ., D. D.)

Why am I here on this earth?

What for am I created?

What is the purpose of my life?

This is a question which seldom fails to cross the mind of a sane dweller of this planet. The irrational sons of Mother Earth have the good luck to pass an easy life with comparatively very little care about the necessaries of life, but the so-called masterpiece of Nature and the noblest of creatures has not to pass from this earth without having served a higher and nobler purpose.

A careful peep into the nature and the working of things brings the fact clearly to light that there is a purpose which all the species of creation that have life in them have to serve. It naturally stands to reason, that man has also a purpose in life and that purpose of his life must certainly be consistent with his superior endowments. The power of discrimination and differentiation between good and evil granted to him by Allah, the Wise must be taken into consideration in deterimining the purpose which is inherent in his life.

The Holy Quran clearly points out that purpose to be the worshipping of God in order to come into union and communion with Him.

Worship of God is, then, the be-all and end-all of human existence. That can be accomplished only through sincere and unselfish love. The love that must go first and foremost of all to the Supreme Being, to Whom we owe our very existence. And for His sake must it go to His people. All our doings and actions must be in strict compliance with His commandments. The very word, Islam, signifies the supreme purpose for which the Muslim lives. He must live to love. He is born to love. Love must permeate his thoughts, his words and his actions. Man must be Love, as God is. This is the object and purpose of his life. This is his beginning and this is his end. Love and nothing else.

Digitized by Khilafat Library Rabwah

VASWANI'S HOMAGE TO MUHAMMAD.

Meditating on Muhammad this month (Nov.) sacred to his memory, I marvel at this man's tremendous *shakti*. In the midst of a disorganised, demoralised, drunken people, worshipping stones and the senses, this man Muhammad stands up – almost alone, bold, challenging, defiant in the face of threats of death. What gives him the strength to stand up as a hero in the fight? And they listen to this man. Whence the magic of his words? Slaves he sets free and outcastes he admits to fellowship with the "upper folk"; and here we are in India still fighting for rights of the untouchables, still unable to bring the outcastes to temples of the gods. Whence did the man Muhammad derive the driving power of his life? India still is afflicted with the evil of drink; our picketing campaigns have gone thus far, no further. The man Muhammad, as the ancient records tell, asked that all liquor be boycotted; and in the streets of Medina they threw out and broke the very jars of drink. Whence the secret of this hypnotic hold of Muhammad upon his people? They were disorganized; he organized them into a nation. They were sunk in semi-savagery; he raised them and redeemed them and made them great and mighty before the nations of the earth. Arabia became the leader of civilizations; Arabic became a torch-bearer of culture; and Arabian culture nourished in Asia and Europe a New Renaissance and a New Humanism. Unto thee, Muhammad, I an humble servant of the Rishis, pay homage in humility and reverence! Unto thee I bow as to a veritable prophet of God. Thy tremendous *shakti* was derived from the Eternal. And centuries unborn will salute thee as an immortal of history!—*The Serendib*.

Digitized by Khilafat Library Rabwah

ISLAM THE GREATEST INTEGRATING FORCE IN THE WORLD.

There could be no better testimony of Islam being the greatest integrating force in the world, capable of satisfactorily solving the complicated and baffling international problems and eminently fitted to conciliate the differences and antagonisms of communities suspicious of each other and to bring into being a real and solid brotherhood of mankind than the unequivocal verdict, given reluctantly though, of Christian missionaries who have had the unique opportunities to study the conditions of Muslims in different lands from very close quarters. One of such missionaries is Mr. Duncan Black MacDonald. In his article, "Whither Islam," in the January number of *The Moslem World* he writes :—

> The world of Islam is in process of change ; there are many drifts in it of baffling complexity, acting and reacting upon one another. Yet there is a unity in Islam, lying behind it all, and holding its own in spite of racial, political, educational, spiritual and economic stresses and strains. What part do Christian missions play in this complex of forces, and what should be the attitude of the Christian missionary towards the people to whom he has been sent and towards the fundamentals of their life and faith? Some things will be very plain to him—and must be plain to anyone in real contact with Moslems. For one thing, they are supernaturalists through and through; behind this visible world of sense there lies for all of them an unseen world, which may hypothetically break in upon them at any time. Those of them who have received a Western education and who wish to stand well with Westerns may try to ignore this, but they too, at heart, are under the same spell. Further, Moslems are genuinely and thoroughly religious, after their fashion. A relationship to the divine is a fundamental reality for the masses of them in a way that our generation in the West has almost completely forgotten. It may not govern their conduct in the ways that we would approve, but it is there as a basal fact in their life. Everyone who is professedly a religious person and who does not accept it as they do is a puzzle and a paradox to them. And, further,

this religious attitude is directly to God—perhaps better, to Allah, for that is His proper name, and He is a personality to them. Yet again, they are His people; they feel they are the people of Allah, His chosen people, as absolutely as the Hebrews felt that they were the people of Jehovah. He demands that they have faith in Him, surrender themselves to Him, take refuge with Him, and so be safe in the last Judgment. For there is a Judgment to come.

All this every one in real contact with Moslems knows, and this is perfectly clear throughout the book from which we have started. All this has affected and does affect all the sides of Moslem life, personal and communal; it lies behind Moslem politics, whether inside a state or in the inter-relations of states; it may for a time be ignored, but it always reasserts itself. It belongs to the very fabric of Moslim life, and to the very soul of Moslem thought. We of the West may like it or not; we may criticize it or we may fear it; but we cannot ignore it, and it is folly to sneer at it and its workings. *It has produced a sense of brotherhood where Christendom has failed; it has linked Moslem states together where the League of Nations has failed. For it has not limited itself to furnishing a means of problematically smoothing out disputes, but has been itself a family union, in which conflict was indeed possible, but was also fratricidal and under the curse of Allah.*

INDIA'S ENEMIES

The Premier's Award has, for the time being, stilled the Communal Controversy. The Muslims are generally satisfied with the Award. The Hindus are bitterly against it. They believe that the Award has sought to, and will always keep, the two major communities from welding into one strong Indian nation. If the Award has disappointed the Hindus, the responsibility for that disappointment lies upon their own shoulders. If they had come to a settlement with the Muslims on the vexed communal question and had won their confidence and satisfied them, they would certainly have secured better terms from the British Government. If the summary of the proceedings of the Third Round Table Conference, published a few days back, is an indication of what proposals for the future constitution of India the White Paper would contain, it can quite safely be predicted that the Paper would fail to satisfy the Congress, the Hindu Mahasabha and even the Hindu Moderates. The realization of the hope of full responsible Government has receded into the remote, dim, future. The communal question has remained a block in the way of the realization of this great hope and on it have the Hindu leaders stumbled again and again. The Muslims were prepared to make all sorts of sacrifices to meet the Hindus half-way. But the Hindus would not budge an inch from their impossible position. They have preferred, so it seems, to remain for an indefinite period, under British tutelage than by removing the well-founded and justified fears of the Muslims to get, in all probability something bordering on complete responsible Government. That the Hindus have always stood in the way of a settlement of the communal question and thus have been instrumental in depriving India of the realization of the dream and hope of self-government, is admitted on all hands. Even a person like F. W. Wilson, a former Editor of *The Pioneer*, Allahabad, who could never be accused of an anti-Hindu

prejudice holds the Hindus responsible for the repeated breakdown of the negotiations on the communal question. His comment on this subject will be read with great interest by our readers. In his recently published book *Indian Chaos* he writes :—

Digitized by Khilafat Library Rabwah

> The rule of the majority and the application of tried and overtried Western democratic principles is the last thing that the organized Muslim is likely to support. The rule of the majority means to a minority a perpetual subordination, and in India, possible persecution. Nothing is more logical than the Congress claim to settle the question of Minorities by democratic rules, but nothing is really so false and hypocritical, when everyone knows that the claims of the majority are so bitterly antagonistic to the rights of the minority. Again, it is unfortunate that half in and half out of the Congress Party is the militant and intransigent Hindu Mahasabha. There are individuals, highly respected personally, who are in the inner camp of both the Congress and this missionary society of orthdox Hinduism. Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya, for example, is one of the leading figures of the Hindu Mahasabha and a veteran Congressman, and if there is one society in India which is, more than any other, responsible for the continuation of the communal-deadlock it is the Hindu Mahasabha. It has forgotten the very elements of negotiations. It is bitter, hostile, prejudiced, and bigoted, and it is practically solely responsible for the double failure of sensible men, on both the Hindu and the Muslim side, to solve the communal problem, at the repeated injunctions of the British Government. When the full history of the London negotiations of 1931 and 1930 is written, it will be found that it was the criminal stupidity of the representatives of the Hindu Mahasabha which prevented agreement and which enabled them to rejoice in their failure. One by one, the points of difference were settled. Mr. Jinnah's famous fourteen points, the charter of the Muslim demands, were resolved one by one. Settlement and compromise was in the air, and then at the last moment, having granted everything that was essential, these children of "democracy" refused to agree to the Muslims possessing thirty-three and a third per cent. of the elected members in the new Central Legislature in British India. They

were prepared to grant thirty per cent, but for the difference of three and a third, they tore up the whole agreement, and made their country a laughing-stock in the eyes of the world.

*NOTES ON THE HOLY QURAN

Suratul-Baqrah

" Those who believe and do good deeds." According to Islam, faith and action are inseparable factors in the attainment of salvation – one loses its virtue without the other. This is in perfect accord with human nature. No sane person values a profession of friendship which is not accompanied by friendly deeds ; and similarly friendly deeds without sincerity of purpose are a body without a soul. The gardens and streams promised to the faithful correspond to faith and actions. Gardens stand for faith, and streams for actions. The comparison is clear and significant. Just as gardens cannot thrive without streams running through them, similarly faith cannot flourish without good actions. There is a delicate implication in the comparison of faith to gardens which we must not miss—that heart being the seat of faith witnesses the beginning of the happiness of heaven. The believer carries a paradise in his heart even in *this* world, and tastes even in his life on earth of the sweet cup of heavenly bliss, which he will drink in a yet fuller measure in the world to come. If, however, we take the word 'gardens' literally, the verse gives a good meaning, inasmuch as the faithful were even in this world favoured with the richest gardens when they became conquerors. It was an earnest of what they will also enjoy in the next. In the Holy Qur-ān we read that the rewards received in this world are a sort of proof for those to be received in the next.

* Under this heading will continue to appear regularly in every issue of the *Review of Religions* explanatory notes on the Holy Quran. These "notes" will comprise translation and detailed and comprehensive explanation of the Quranic verses, beginning with Sura-tul-Fatiha and will be written by the famous writer and theologian, Maulana Sher Ali, B. A., aided and helped by the *dars* of the Quran which the persent Head of the Ahmadiyya Community, Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud Din Mahmud Ahmad, has been giving from time to time at Qadian. In this way, we hope, by the grace of God, to bring out, in due course, a complete and exhaustive commentary of the Quran.—*Ed.*

(*c*) رزقنا *ruziqnā* (we were given) also means "we were promised." That is, whenever they will be given any fruit in paradise they will recall the promise which was given them in this life, and will cry out, "this is what we had been promised in the previous life."

Taking the word *ruziqnā* strictly in its literal sense, the sentence would refer to the spiritual bliss which the faithful enjoy in this very life in the performance of their devotion to God and other good deeds. When the faithful will taste the fruits of paradise, they will be reminded of the spiritual blessings they shall have already tasted in this life, on account of the close resemblance between the two, and shall cry out, "There are the fruits which were given to us in the former life." This shows that the fruits of paradise will not be material fruits but spiritual ones.

متشابها *Mutāshabihā* means "resembling one another." That is, the fruits of paradise will not be exactly the same bounties which had been promised to the faithful in their life on this earth, or the same spiritual fruits which the true devotees had tasted in their previous life, but they will be bounties which will bear resemblance to them. They will not be the bananas and grapes of this world, but they will be blessings which will have some resemblance to them. For the blessings of the life to come, the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of God be upon him !) said :—

ما لا عين رأت ولا اذن سمعت ولا خطر بقلب بشر

i. e, The bounties of paradise are things "which the eye has not seen, nor has the ear heard, nor has the mind conceived." This is in exact accordance with what the Holy Qur-ān says with reference to the bounties of heaven. We read in Chapter XXXII, 18 : "No soul knows what cheer of eyes is kept hidden for them, as a reward for their actions."

(*d*) In the sentence "For them are gardens through which flow streams" we may also read the significance that

Digitized by Khilafat Library Rabwah

the Muslims will be made to rule over countries which abound in gardens and streams. This prophecy met with its fulfilment when the Muslims conquered countries which were among the most fertile and beautiful regions of the earth, such as the valleys of the Nile and the Euphrates, about which the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of God be upon him !) said :—

النيل والفرات نهران من انهار الجنة.

" The Nile and the Euphrates are two of the streams of Paradise."

(e) " *And therein they shall have pure spouses.*" This verse, like other similar verses, has been stigmatized by some traducers of Islam as offering to the Muslims the temptation of sensual enjoyment in paradise. The objection is simply absurd. It cannot be denied that a good wife is always a source of purest joy and happiness to man. It is foolish to consider woman as unclean any more than man. If the mutual company of man and woman is a source of pure joy and happiness in this world, why should it not continue to be so in the next. The Muslims have been promised ازواج مطهرة *azwajum mutahharatun* which means that the spouses in paradise will be pure and holy by their very nature. This description of theirs is also a reply to the objection of the traducers of Islam, for it shows that their company will not at all be incompatible with the pure and holy character of paradise. Evil will have no place there. It must be borne in mind that the blessings of heaven are not to be physical but spiritual. As, according to the plain words of the Holy Qur-ān and the express saying of the Holy Prophet, no man can have a true conception of any of the bounties of heaven, we cannot form a clear idea of the real nature of the pure spouses who will form one of the inconceivable bounties of paradise, and will be a source of happiness to man. Under such circumstances, it is simply foolish to make any speculation as to the character